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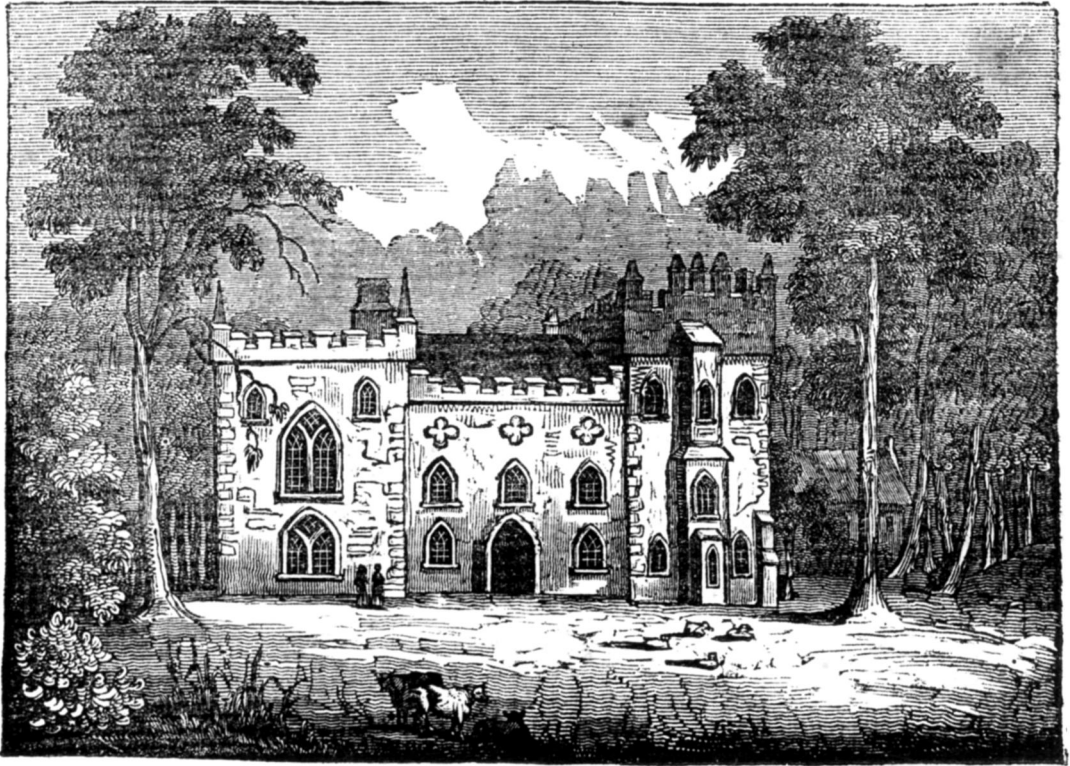
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CLONTARF CASTLE.

A DAY'S RAMBLE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE CITY.

Reader—Should you have a desire to diverge from the confined and fetid atmosphere of our crowded metropolis, with its unvaried scene of bustle and activity, to enjoy the relaxation of an agreeable morning or evening's ramble in a delightful district, and inhale the pure and vivifying air of the country, impregnated with the balmy fragrance of the sweet wild flowers of the field, come with us to FINGALL, where you can enjoy the sea-breeze of Clontarf, a ramble by Merino, or a saunter on the Goosegreen road, without experiencing the suffocation or the annoyance occasioned by the driving of the jaunting cars, jingles, &c., on the opposite side of the city—the danger of being overrun by a drunken jarvey from Baggot-street, or the fatigue of a long walk, to breathe in country air.

The north side of Dublin may truly be termed classic ground. In former ages it was the scene of many fierce contests, some of which occupy a proud page in Irish history. Fingall, the land of the white stranger, a name which it still retains, was obtained from having been possessed by the Fionn, Gæl, or Norwegians, who held in their iron grasp a great portion of the kingdom for two or three centuries. The district so named extended, according to Lanigan, from the broad and fertile plain that stretches north of the Liffey, until it meets the highlands that hang over the Boyne.

This district is now one of the most beautiful and improved about Dublin. It is one delightful, wide spreading plain, studded with elegant seats, and no straggling,

disorderly villages to mar the beauty of the prospect; with Dublin bay, the bold and rugged promontory of Howth, and Ireland's Eye—the residence of the sons of Nessan, in the prospective.

The Goosegreen road, which strikes into the country from the Richmond road, is but a short distance from Drumcondra bridge: fifteen minutes walk will bring you to it from Mountjoy-square, by Drumcondra or Ballybough. Opposite this road, on the town side of the Tolga,* which rolls along calmly and unbroken, save by the cascade at Waterfall-avenue, is Fortex-grove, the late picturesque retreat of Frederick Jones, Esq., formerly patentee and manager of Crow-street theatre.

Passing up a gentle ascent to the left, on an eminence stands Clonturk-house; a plain, yellow building, celebrated as the residence of the enterprising Dhuval, who speculated on converting this place into a second Vauxhall. Here he had fire-works, rockets, bombs, swing-swangs, hobbies, and a mineral well. Oh, the reminiscences of 1819! The well, by the aid of sulphur, nails, old iron, &c., &c., was made to possess a chalybeate quality; and never were Abernethy, or St. John Long more sought after. Crowds of Belles and Beaux, the hale, and the unhealthy, came to taste those halcyon waters; and, oh! the bright eyes that glistened around that fount of health and life. Poor Dhuval! whilst your speculations lasted, what an able auxiliary thou wert to Gretna and old Hy-

* Commonly called the Finglass river.

men. Opposite Clontarf-house, on the left, is Belvidere, the seat of Sir Coghill Coghill, a handsome brick building, formerly occupied by Lord Chancellor Lifford; and on the right, Drumcondra-castle: a square castellated building, the residence of Richard Williams, Esq., formerly inhabited by Sir James Galbraith. Further on to the left is Drumcondra-house, a magnificent square building, of Portland stone, erected by the late Earl of Charleville, now in the occupation of William Stewart Hamilton, Esq. Further on, at a serpentine curve in the road, is Hampton lodge, the residence of Mrs. Williams, widow of the late Thomas Williams, Esq., secretary to the bank of Ireland. The neatly cropped hedges, nicely gravelled walks, and precise arrangement of the grass plots, give these well regulated grounds a neat appearance. At some distance forward, down an avenue which strikes off at another turn in the road, is Upton-lodge, formerly occupied by Major Upton. From this forward, and, indeed, in general, the road wears the appearance of an extensive walk in a nobleman's demesne: not a cabin is to be seen, while tall rows of stately trees overhang and meet across the road. A few perches forward from Upton-lodge, beyond a square ivy covered observatory, a few figures, rudely carved on the trunks of three trees, mark the spot on which a young lad, assistant game-keeper to Lord Charlemont, some time since lost his life in a scuffle with a young gentleman who had been shooting in his lordship's demesne, which lies a short distance to the eastward of this road. A cairn of stones, according to ancient custom was raised on the spot where he fell, but has been removed. The road now ascends in a gentle acclivity, at the top of which, to the left, is Sion-hill, the residence of Mrs. Courtney, formerly occupied by Colonel Mason. It is an antique brick building, commanding a magnificent view of Dublin, the Wicklow mountains, and the Park.

Opposite to it is High Park, the residence of Robert Grey, Esq., a respectable merchant in Linenhall-street.—The house is a very tasteful building, and the grounds judiciously and tastefully laid out; the late Master Ball, and Major Brownrigg, were successively proprietors of this place. Next to High Park is Hartfield, the residence of Neal John O'Neil, Esq. This house was erected by the late Colonel Hart, from whom it passed, about the year 1773, into the possession of the family of the late Hugh Hamill of Dominick-street, Esq., uncle to the lady of its present proprietor. The high castellated walls and embrasures by which the approach on the front is guarded, although a modern house, carry the mind instinctively to the contemplation of the scenes of strife that shook those plains in other days, amid the war-cries of the native Irish and their Danish invaders.

Next to Hartfield, on the opposite side, is Thorndale, the handsome residence of David Henry Sherrard, Esq., formerly occupied by Mrs. Twigg of Merrion-square. Next we come to Bellefield, a beautiful cottage lately occupied by the Hon. Major Jones, opposite to which is Elm-park, the residence of ——— Hutton, Esq., of Summerhill.—The next, and last in this direction, is Beaumont, the beautiful seat of Arthur Guinness, Esq.

But it will be considered almost time to say something relative to the Castle of Clontarf, the engraving of which lies before us.

What Irishman has not heard of Clontarf; and who is it does not feel his pulse beat high, his brow elevate, and his soul expand with conscious pride and exultation at the recollection of the glorious struggle which took place at this spot? when after a well-fought battle, the gallant Brian Boiromhe drove the proud invaders, the enemies of his country, before him into the sea, or strewed the surrounding shore with their lifeless bodies.

The Castle of Clontarf, it is commonly supposed, was erected in the reign of Henry the Second by the Netterville family, and was originally a commandery of the Knights Templars. It still retains, from the introduction of Gothic windows, a semi-ecclesiastical appearance, and so far coincides with the character of that order; and although it has suffered considerably from the effects of modern improvement, yet its general character and the noble and venerable timber that surrounds it, impress it with the stamp of "hoar antiquity;" and the recollections associated

with its name and former destination, make it an object of peculiar interest to the Irishman and antiquarian.

The village of Clontarf is situated two miles from Dublin, on the shores of the delightful bay. It consists chiefly of a long street, extending from the sea-shore to the castle, and forming a noble vista in front of that building. At a short distance was situated "a royal charter school," opened in 1749 for the reception of one hundred boys, but now closed for ever; and the building, which was ornamented with a fine portico and pillars, tower, cupola, clock, &c., is now converted into private dwellings. Near the castle stands the church, erected on the site of a monastery founded A. D. 550; a neat, plain, modern structure: in the cemetery attached are several enclosed tombs but no ancient inscriptions.

It was in the year 838 that the "Northmen" first invaded this country. They entered the Liffey with a fleet of sixty sail, and took possession of Dublin. The dubh-gael, (the "dark strangers") or Danes, possessed themselves of the southern parts, and the fion-gael, ("white strangers") or Norwegians, extended themselves northward. Previous to their invasion this district was called Bregb, and possessed by a people denominated the Bregii. In 896 Flanagan, king of Bregb, was killed by the Danes. From thence up to the eleventh century, Fingall was the scene of continual struggles between the Danes and the native Irish. It was reserved for the renowned monarch, Brian Boromhe, on the memorable plains of Clontarf, in 1014, to break their power.

This celebrated conflict, in which Brian and his son lost their lives, having been detailed in the 17th number of our Journal, it is unnecessary here to mention any of the particulars further than to state that it was occasioned by Maelmurry Mac Morrogh, son of Murchart, who usurped the crown of Leinster in the year 999, having in 1013, with the Lagenians and Danes, entered Meath and ravaged it. Maelseachlin, in retaliation, set fire to the adjacent parts of Leinster, and ravaged Fingall, as far as the Hill of Howth, where he was met and defeated by Maelmurry, and Sitric the Danish king of Dublin.

Brian marched from Munster to his assistance, and encamped at Kihnainham, where he remained from August to Christmas without bringing them to battle, and retired again to Munster, but returned in the following lent, and passing by Finglass encamped at Clontarf, until Good Friday, 1014, when the battle took place on the plain at Clontarf. The result of this battle did not immediately extinguish the Danish power in Ireland; for we find that in 1052, Maclnambo plundered Fingall, and burned the country from Dublin to a place named Albene. The Danes of Dublin made opposition, and a fierce engagement took place outside the fortress of Dublin,* where many fell on both sides. Eachmarcash, son of Reginald, Lord of the Danes, fled across the sea, and Maclnambo assumed the lordship of the Danes.

In 1162 Mortough O'Loughlin plundered Fingall.†

The early ecclesiastical establishments in this district, within the more immediate vicinity of Dublin, are St. Doolagh's, on the Malahide road, which is one of the most ancient churches in Ireland.‡ It was erected by St. Doulach or Dulech, an Irishman, son of Amalgad. It was anciently called Clochar.

In 665, the year of the great pestilence in Ireland, St. Malaga (Molua) had a church and religious establishment at a place called Laorn-beachuire, in Fingall, near Dublin. It is conjectured the site was in the now townland of Clontarf, and within the demesne of Drumcondra-house, the residence of William Stewart Hamilton.¶ There is still in existence there the ruin of an old church, which tradition says was an abbey; but ancient ecclesiastical writings do not set forth any abbey in Fingall so near

* In a map of Dublin of 1610, "Fiam's castle" is shewn at the verge of the Liffey, opposite Wood-quay.

† Mortough was prince of Tyrone and monarch of Ireland, of the Hy-Nial line.

‡ Lanigan, iii. p. 359.

¶ To this place we shall have occasion hereafter to allude more particularly,

Dublin, with the exception of St. Mary's Abbey, near the Liffey. It is supposed to have been erected in 948 by the Danes, for Benedictine monks.

Baldoye, Raheny, and Portrane were given to Christ Church, as appears by a document in the black book belonging to it, which runs thus:—"Sitricus, King of Dublin, son of Ableb, (Aulof, Earl of Dublin, gave to the Holy Trinity, and to Donatus, Bishop of Dublin, a place where the arches or vaults were founded, to build the church of the Holy Trinity on, together with the following lands, viz. Balldulck, Rechen, and Portnahern, with their villans, cattle, and corn." In 1014, Donatus was named bishop of this see.*

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS.

Having in the preceding article given some idea of the interesting district of Fingall, the following slight sketch of the rise, progress, and final destruction of the Knights Templars, to whom the Castle of Clontarf formerly belonged, may not be unacceptable.†

This society took its rise during the period of the first crusade at Jerusalem, about the year 1118; and although formed at a period later than the other military order of the Knight Hospitallers, or of St. John of Jerusalem, soon outstripped it in wealth and power, and was also the earliest abolished. The name assumed by the knights had, according to some, a reference to vows entered into for the defence of the holy temple against infidels; and according to others, from the accidental occupation of some chambers adjacent to the temple, by the original members of the order. The knights were ecclesiastics; differing in this from those of Saint John, who although bound by strict monastic rules were not in orders; their vows were very strict, enjoining celibacy, poverty, humility, and inveterate war against infidels; to the latter it must be admitted they adhered pretty steadily, but the former injunctions were often interpreted with great laxity. Their dress in peace consisted of a long, white robe, having the cross of St. George on the left shoulder, and worn after the manner of a cloak or mantle; a cap, turned up, such as heralds call a cap of maintainance, covered the head; and the staff or abacus of the order, having at its extremity an encircled cross, was borne in the right hand. Their panoply in war did not differ materially from that of the knights of that period, except the distinctive cross, the badge of the order being emblazoned on the cuirass, and the *Agnus Dei* was displayed on their banners.

Their superior, elected for life, chosen by the order and styled the grand master, took rank as an independent prince. Immediately under him were the preceptors or priors, each ruling over his peculiar district, and subject to the grand master and the statutes of the order. The number of the knights' companions were unlimited; they were each attended by two esquires, who were usually candidates for admission into the order, into which none were enrolled but those who could prove their nobility of descent for two generations.

Their preceptories or priories were usually surrounded by what was called a *peculiar*; that is an ecclesiastical jurisdiction independent of the bishop of the diocese, and were generally erected near a river, often on a slope, or at the bottom of an eminence; they were sometimes built with that jealous regard to strength and security usual in the baronial residences of the day, but frequently were of a moderate size, capable of accommodating from twenty to thirty knights; the dread of the order, who were accounted the best lances in Christendom, serving them for ramparts and fosses. There was always a chapel, and sometimes a church attached, and the surrounding meadow served them as a tilt yard and place of exercise.

Few of these buildings have escaped the wreck of time; many of them have merged into private residences, and of those which remain, Clontarf Castle is, we believe, the most perfect specimen extant in this country.

The institution of the Knights Templars exactly suited the taste of an age tinctured with all the elevating spirit of romance, and heightened by the spirit of religious enthusiasm; and the Christian world was so well pleased with the unexampled valour and Christian virtues displayed by the first members, that in the space of 126 years from their first institution, they were possessed of no less than nine thousand manors in Christendom; and at the time it was determined to put a period to their existence, they were in actual possession of sixteen thousand.

But these times of their prosperity passed away. Corrupted by luxury and profusion, they degenerated from their austere simplicity, and original purity and uprightness; and instead of illuminating the world by their good example, they became the model and standard of every vice that could disgrace humanity. Pride, covetousness, cruelty, and infidelity, aggravated by every species of tyranny and oppression, were the distinguishing marks of their character; and independent of all authority, and trampling on all laws human or divine, they became the objects of universal hatred and detestation; and their character, as given by Matthew Paris, fully presents the picture which Sir Walter Scott has so admirably portrayed of them in his novel of *Ivanhoe*.

Philip, King of France, was a prince naturally avaricious and jealous of his prerogative; he beheld their rising greatness with a malignant eye, and their possessions with envy; and taking advantage of the general feeling against them, he determined, in conjunction with the pope, to suppress the order.

Luxury, intemperance, and cruelty were crimes too general in that age to bear particularly hard upon the Templars—they were, therefore, accused of sorcery, unnatural lusts, and idolatry—charges so monstrous as almost to exceed belief; but which were readily credited in that credulous age; and the people being prepossessed against them, Philip found it easy to carry the iniquitous transaction through his courts; and upon the proofs adduced, their estates, houses, and effects were seized; and their persons simultaneously secured in castles, prisons, &c.—their estates and effects were sequestered into the hands of commissioners; and the grand master and several of his knights were subjected to the torture, under the extremity of which they gave vent to expressions which were afterwards wrested into a confession of their guilt, and they were publicly condemned and burned alive in Paris in the year 1307.

In England, Edward the Second, tempted by the amazing accession of property consequent on this persecution, followed the example of Philip—the designs of both being alike favoured by the pope. It was, therefore, publicly ordained by the king and his council, that all of the order throughout his dominions should be seized; and in the year 1307, the order for their suppression was transmitted to John Wogan, Justiciary of Ireland, on the Wednesday immediately after the feast of the Epiphany, enjoining him to have the same executed without delay. The mandate was accordingly obeyed; and on the morrow of the purification they were everywhere seized and committed to prison—Gerald, fourth son of Maurice, lord of Kerry, being then grand master of the order in Ireland.

It does not appear that the Templars of Ireland were as hardly dealt with as those on the Continent; perhaps their conduct was not so flagrant; they had fought and bled in defence of the English power in this country; for in the year 1274, William Fitz Roger, the prior of Kilmahnam, was taken prisoner with several others, by the Irish at Glyndelory, when many of the friars were slain; and in the years 1296 and 1301, William de Rosse, the then prior, filled the honourable situation of lord deputy of the kingdom; and in 1302, but a few years before their ruin, he was appointed chief justice of Ireland; this argues that he at least was a man of unblemished reputation and acknowledged probity; and, perhaps, may account for a degree of lenity with which they appear to have been treated by the authorities here; as we find the king, Edward the Second, found it necessary by his writ, dated September the 29th, 1309, to further command the said Justiciary to apprehend without delay all the Tem-

* To the observation of our intelligent Correspondent, CAROLUS, we are indebted for most of the foregoing particulars.

† Condensed from an article by R. A.